

**Wethersfield Library Board
Minutes of January 27, 2009**

Members present: Greg Bedula, Kim Bobin, Paul Courchaine, Susan Grady, Ralph Horowitz, Jen Miglus, Brad Milvae Pauline Moon

Member/s excused: Clare Meade

Staff present: Laurel Goodgion, director; Liz Kirkpatrick, asst. director

Others present: Luci Domick, president of the Friends of the Library;
Paul Montinieri, Town Council Liaison
Jeff Kotkin, Town Council

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Polly Moon called the meeting to order at 7:07.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: NONE

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

The Council Liaison report was placed first on the agenda. Paul Montinieri told the Board that the Library is critically important to the community. The need for the community to get back in the Library puts the Library in a special position. He added that all in leadership understand the Library's dilemma. He said the renovation will weigh in on the Council's decisions. There needs to be some leveraging. There is tightening on all levels. The town and its departments need to face the budget now. All departments have been asked to examine their budgets with an aggressive eye and make their own budgetary decisions. He urged the Board to be creative and diligent. There is uncertainty about EDS funding, which comprises 7-8 percent of the Board of Education's budget. The Board of Education will be dramatically impacted as will all other departments. He urged the Board to keep communicating with the Council, ask if there are any questions, "advocate and press hard" for the Library.

Greg Bedula arrived at 7:20.

RENOVATION

Laurel reported that the staff is working very hard.

She and Liz put together a punch list and met with Joe Coombs and Mike Turner. The work on the punch list was color coded: electrical, carpentry, painting, etc.

The telephone installer was excellent.

The children's services desk, paid for by the Friends of the Library, was installed.

The Welcome Center, paid for by the Moms' Club, was set up in the Children's Department.

The repaired furniture has been returned. Other furniture ordered will be in.

The new display cabinet is finished.

The teen booths are in.

Installation of the stairway handrail will begin shortly.

The Library will open on Monday. Some people called to volunteer. They will greet patrons and check shelves.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

President Luci Domick passed around a copy of the Friends' flyer encouraging library users to express their appreciation of the Library to Town Council members.

The Friends are hosting a luncheon for the Library staff tomorrow.

This year's membership drive is over.

There will be a book sale in June. There is space for a Book Nook in the new Library.

Lucille Plouffe and Marybeth Mahler are working to have it open whenever the Library is open.

Paul Montinieri left at 7:42.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF December 2, 2008

The minutes of December 2, 2009 were approved as distributed. There were two abstentions.

QUESTIONS FOR THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

The Action Fund Report was not ready for distribution. Laurel will mail it out to Board Members.

SUGGESTED REVISION TO THE PERSONNEL MANUAL PREFACE

The preface needed to be updated to reflect the fact that the Town Manager is the person authorized to negotiate union contracts.

Paul Courchaine moved to approve the proposed revision to the Preface to the Employee Handbook of Personnel Policies and Procedures. Brad Milvae seconded. The motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Outreach/PR

The committee met on January 6. Kim Bobin reported that she spoke with Margaret Zachei, principal of Hanmer and a former Library Board member, about how the Library could be of help to the school. Mrs. Zachei said that there are 127 families speaking 18 different languages in grades K-6. She suggested the Library have an orientation for new families. Another suggestion was conducting conversation groups with families new to America. Kim Bobin volunteered to help with this. Susan Grady and Jen Miglus did also. Mrs. Zachei also brought up the idea of a kindergarten orientation.

There was a discussion about the video Kim Bobin and her son are making in which a cross-section of Library users will briefly state why the Library is important to them.

Jen Miglus has been looking into Story Corps, an oral history of people in the community that is then archived in the Library of Congress. She spoke to Henry Dutcher, who was in charge of the program in Enfield last year. She is going to contact Fairfield Library to find out how they conducted the program. The cost is \$4500.

Another way to raise the profile of the Library is to have an essay contest on what the Library means to me and have the Town Council judge the entries.

The Friends of the Library are willing to print the patron feedback cards.

Some ideas were generated about a party for the Library's grand opening: a soft opening for dignitaries and donors; a two-hour open house-- have it tie in with the One Book Program in March and/or the Phil Lohman Literary Landmark Program on March 26.

There needs to be a sponsor to fund the celebration. Jen Miglus said she would look into the cost of having the party catered by Ascot Catering.

This evening Kim reported that she met with Laurel and Liz about using a room in the Library for the video. Today she met with Shirley Steinmetz, former teacher of English as a Second Language.

Jen spoke with Fairfield Library and found out that the Story Corps program would be too expensive. She suggested that Kim might adopt the Story Corps model into her video. She also recommended a book by Dave Isay, founder of Story Corps, which could help with generating a list of questions to ask interviewees.

Finance Committee

Paul Courchaine reported that the committee is working diligently on the budget to be discussed in executive session.

PROPOSED SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

There will be a special Board meeting on Feb. 3, 2009.

At 8:02 Paul Courchaine moved to go into executive session. Jen Miglus seconded. The motion carried.

Luci Domick left at 8:02.

At 8:59 Paul Courchaine moved to come out of executive session. Ralph Horowitz seconded. The motion carried.

Jeff Kotkin, town councilor, arrived at 8:59. Polly Moon brought him up to date on Councilor Montinieri's perspective. Jeff reported that the Town is not in bad shape for this current year. The tax collection rate is 99 percent. The fear is that the rate of collection won't be as good in the future.

No one knows what the federal government will come through with. The state is the biggest worry. Revenue is down from sales and income taxes. There is a fear that the eight million the town gets from the state for education will be reduced.

Seventy million of the town's eighty-three million dollar budget comes from the taxpayers. Property values went up twenty-seven percent as a result of revaluation. Jeff said he does not want the mill rate to change.

In answer to a question about what kind of budget he was looking for, Jeff answered that he was "tight-fisted."

At 9:25 Jeff Kotkin left.

At 9:26 Susan Grady moved to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters and union negotiations.

At 9:37 Brad Milvae moved to come out of executive session. Greg Bedula seconded. The motion carried.

At 9:40 Greg Bedula moved to adjourn. Brad Milvae seconded. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Grady
Secretary

Date